

in the stars by eddiekissbrak

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Summary:

technically, you could see the stars from anywhere in derry. a small town not yet overtaken by the towering sky-rises or cloudy pollutions of the neighboring industrial plants, just about any spot was good enough to crane your neck back and see constellations from horizon to horizon in any direction. not that richie was gonna stand in front of the aladdin looking like a flipping idiot trying to see cassiopeia or hercules; he might as well slap a sign on his chest that said “henry bowers please kick the shit out of me.”

you could see the stars from anywhere in derry, but the quarry, still and calm and free of sociopaths horny for violence, was richie’s favorite.

(from my spotify wrapped prompt.)

in the stars

Author's Note:

it's laid down in the grass /
with our old and worn-out shoes /
looking at the stars /
on a blanket made for two

#12: in the stars - my brothers and i

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"just be home by midnight, boys," maggie says, smacking richie's hand away when he scoops a finger-full of brownie batter from the side of the mixing bowl. "richie! wash your hands first!"

"yeah, yeah, back by midnight, whatever, thanks mom!" he's so tall he has to bend down to kiss her cheek now – like he has since he was 15, shooting up past her already impressive five-foot-eight and then surpassing even his father less than a year and a half later. the tallest of the losers by an inch (with stan tailing just behind) and the gangliest by a mile (though bill's clumsy doe movements could give richie's elbows a run for their money), richie was always bending, slouching, cramming himself into rooms and chairs and twin-sized beds. maybe that's why he liked the quarry so much: at least out there he didn't have to worry about smacking and whacking and thwacking into low door-frames or shin-height coffee tables.

(eddie had laughed so hard the day richie ran forehead-first into a support beam of the bunker that he'd fallen out of the hammock. they'd spent the rest of the evening on richie's couch watching cartoons: richie, holding an ice pack to his head, and eddie, holding one to his wrist. karma had never felt so fucking satisfying.)

"and take the quilt from the hall closet this time instead of one of my nice ones from the living room," she adds sternly, and richie looks away, sheepish, as he wipes the saliva from his finger across his jeans. clearly he hadn't done as good of a job getting the dirt stains out of the expensive fleece as he'd thought.

"i got it, mrs. t," eddie says, holding up a roll of patchwork fabric half the size of his body. richie was the tallest, and eddie was the smallest, and it'd always been that way. (except for the summer that eddie hit his growth spurt before bill and spent two months holding that half-inch of height like a goddamn trophy until bill eventually overtook him again.) richie kinda liked it though; even now, eighteen years old and set on the path to university in the fall, they both still fit in the old worn-down hammock. they didn't fit well, but they fit, and even if they didn't, they would've found a way to squeeze in. eddie and richie were always finding ways to be close, making silent excuses for the way their thighs pressed together as they played video games or pretending their hands didn't linger with every playful smack or tickle fight. they didn't talk about it: the other losers didn't either.

"rich, c'mon, we're wasting daylight."

"that's the *point*, eds, it's star-gazing." but rich crosses the kitchen in two easy steps, and they take the bickering that follows out the front door as maggie calls out *have fun!* with a knowing smile on her face.

mothers always know.

* * *

"and that one's gumbus minoris, named after the bravest man that ever lived; slayer of blockheads and — eddie, stop laughing, this is important — slayer of blockheads and slayer of pussy—"

“oh, beep beep richie,” eddie says, but his cheeks are red from giggling and his brown eyes sparkle with mirth under the light of the moon. “gumby doesn’t have his own fucking constellation.”

“he does too! trust me,” richie sniffs, rolling over to prop himself up on his elbow and using his free hand to push his glasses up his nose. “i’m an expert.”

“on what, bullshitting?”

richie scoffs. “why, i never!” he throws his palm over his chest, twisting his voice into something whiny and high pitched and about as close to a southern belle as eddie was to out-growing richie’s horrible Voices.

(which was to say not close, not even in the slightest.)

“ah swear it eddie, on all the fiyaflies in the field and all the twists in your britches.” richie gets another burst of sweet giggles for that and a light smack to his stomach. eddie’s hand lingers for a moment, fingers skimming over the faded print of richie’s prized liger t-shirt before dropping away. eddie’s gaze is still pointed at the sky, so richie lets himself indulge in the soft curves of the boy’s profile, in the way his long eyelashes brush against the hairs of delicate eyebrows.

when they were younger, richie used to pull eddie close and give him a gentle noogie or pinch his cheeks and call him *cutecutecute*. shit, richie still did that, did it a lot more regularly than ‘best friends’ probably should, but lately, richie was having to bite his tongue to keep from calling eddie something else — pretty, maybe. or beautiful. a downright knock-out, from head to toe. richie’s eyes flick to the stars. *heavenly* would work, too.

“i’m telling you, it’s up there! see, right...” richie leans over onto eddie’s side of the blankets — to get the sight lines right, of course — and points, tracing the outline of the green character over a configuration of stars. “right there.”

eddie tilts his head away from the sky, beaming, and when richie turns his head too their faces are close enough that richie almost goes

cross-eyed. “uh-huh. is pokey up there, too, mr. expert?”

the weight of eddie’s stare sits on richie’s heart like a hot hand on his bare chest, like always, but richie’s greens are aimed down. soft brown freckles are spattered across eddie’s nose and spread ear to ear: fuzzy stars against warm skin. richie’s spent hours finding his own constellations there, and across eddie’s arms, and his back, too, when they were all laid out on the rocks drying off after a swim.

“nah,” richie says, and brings his hand down to ghost his index finger over the slant of eddie’s cheekbone. he traces... *something*, some shape, drawing invisible lines from one freckle to the next; suddenly he can’t remember who pokey was, let alone what he looked like. “he’s right here.”

the puffs of eddie’s breath come out uneven — richie can feel it against where his palm hovers over eddie’s mouth — and when richie finally scrounges up the courage to meet the other’s gaze, eddie’s eyes have become little more than chocolate rings around blown-out pupils.

the desire to close the gap and kiss his best friend is stupidly, ferociously, unbearably overwhelming. there is a possibility (or maybe just the heart’s whisper of hope in richie’s chest) that, with the way eddie’s eyes flit to catch the movement of richie’s tongue wetting his lower lip, eddie might want to kiss him right back.

but beneath every loud, obnoxious, look-at-me-or-i-swear-i-might-die funny kid’s facade, there is a coward. taking chances on a dirty joke, on crossing lines with Voices and bits, that was easy. taking chances on this? eddie and richie stood on a tightrope, a precipice of love and *love*.

don’t ruin this, the coward screams. *you can’t lose him now*.

so richie grins, pokes eddie’s nose, and flops back onto the blanket with his hands behind his head. “don’t bother asking about the blockheads, though, fuck if i know where they—”

if the force of eddie’s body dropping onto his wasn’t enough to knock the wind out of richie, the feeling of lips — his best friend’s

lips, *eddie's* lips, eddie's pink, pouty, perfect lips — against his own did the trick. frozen, richie stares, wide-eyed behind the frames of his glasses that'd gone lop-sided when eddie flew across the blanket at him.

kiss him back, fuckass!

he does. richie's head thumps softly to the ground as his hands fly to curl around eddie's jaw, tender and desperate all at once. there's no finesse, no grace to any of it; it's all the fierce, wild energy that always ricocheted between them focused into a single, bruising kiss. richie's heart is hammering against his ribs so hard he's sure it's shaking his entire being.

eventually, eddie pulls back, though his body stays half-flung over richie's like a tiny blanket of energy. he's breathing hard, and even in the faint glow of moonbeams, richie knows eddie's face is flushed. actually, his probably is too; his cheeks feel hot (and his hands, and his stomach, and everywhere else eddie's pressed up against).

"you're a blockhead, richie," eddie says, but his face lights up with the biggest smile richie's ever seen.

i love you, richie's heart sings.

"no, you're a blockhead," richie's mouth says. his brain's a little scrambled still, swimming with thoughts of *eddie eddie eddie*, and his smack talk suffers as a consequence. eddie still laughs; eddie always laughed. eddie would never tell, but he thought richie was the funniest person in the world, easy. it didn't matter the joke, and it never would. if richie was speaking, eddie was right there with him, hanging on every word that came out of his trash mouth like richie was spinning gold with his tongue.

"guess that makes us a pair." richie smiles then too, a rush of joy, unbridled and pure, washing over him so strongly he thought he might drown in it. the moment felt infinite and ephemeral, impossible and palpable, all at once.

"guess so."

they don't get home before midnight. in three weeks, richie (and the rest of the losers, too) would leave for school, while eddie would stay in derry to take classes locally. the coward inside richie screamed worries of drifting apart, permanently or not, but for tonight, it was silenced by the bravest man that ever lived.

eddie, not fucking gumby.

you could see the stars from anywhere in derry, but laying at the top of the quarry side-by-side with eddie, hands clasped between them and ankles hooked so that their dirty converse knocked together — yeah, that took the fucking crown.